

Music Reviews
November 2019
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Handbells etc

Singing bell for Worship Music

We have used a singing bell a number of times to start worship or with other music during worship. We just used it at our church for Deep River, a spiritual. This works really well for Amazing Grace as well. The ringers can be at the tables for the singing bell or you can do it with surround sound and have the ringers spread out around the sanctuary. For example, start singing bells using the major or minor chord that the music selection is in – also add the 2nd (in the Key of G – use A as well) Once the singing bells are established, then have a soloist with ring the melody on handbells or a singer sing the first verse. Once the first verse is done, the piano/ organ or other bells can fill in the accompaniment and the singing bells stop. For a Remembrance worship service, the singing bell can be done while names of those remembered are spoken or candles are lit.

Bread of Angels

By Payn

5 octaves Level 3+

This is an amazing original composition by Dr William Payn. He is truly one of my favourite composers and directors! In this music, he features low bass chimes throughout the piece to make it easier for the low bass ringers. It changes key 4 times enhancing the music tremendously. It is one of his pieces that church and community handbell choirs can ring because it's only a Level 3+. His dynamics really add meaning to the music.

Nocturne No 4 in C (Song of Peace)

By Helman

3456 octaves Level 3

This is an older original composition by Michael Helman. This selection is melodic and beautiful. "Song of Peace" will work well for worship around Remembrance Day as well as the peace Sunday in Advent. Using the Nocturne No 4 as the title, it can work in any concert or worship setting! Yes, Michael has written three other Nocturnes – the first Nocturne in C Minor which is my all time favourite handbell original composition!

A Mighty Blessing

By Holden-Holloway

345 octaves Level 3

This original composition was composed after a church fire for the dedication of their new bells. It is filled with majestic joy and thanksgiving. It is perfect for a service of celebration. Our

church will soon officially be an affirming church and I will plan to use this composition for that service!

Andante in F Minor

By Helman

345 octaves Level 2+

This is another one of Michael Helman's original compositions. It was used at the Classic Copper handbell event in St. Albert, Alberta this summer and ringers loved it so much, many of them are wanting to ring this piece with their own church choirs. My ringers at Fort Saskatchewan love this piece the first time they played it because it really plays by itself musically! Ringers need to focus on key changes but the melody flows and swells naturally.

Come to Jesus

Arr Raney

345 Level 3 with synthesizer

This is a contemporary worship piece for handbells filled with comfort and hope. Joel Raney has done a wonderful job of arranging this music for bells and synthesizer. If you don't have a synthesizer available, then use a string setting on the organ. This arrangement can be played without a synthesizer but the addition of it really fills out the music perfectly. Whenever there is an instrument added to a handbell composition, I like to have it added. It gives the opportunity for ringers to work with other musicians and gives other musicians a change to work with ringers!

Brightest and Best

By Winter

345 octaves

Level 3

There are number of other handbell compositions that have this title (or ones like it) but I like this by far the best! When I first saw the title, I imagined the Christmas star – thinking that this would work well as an original piece of music for a Christmas program. Then I read the dedication – this music was written for “Keith Hammond, a keen and valued member of Broxbourne Handbell Ringers (England) whose warmth, humour and simple kindness brightened the lives of all who knew him”. When my choir plays this piece, I will challenge the audience to ensure that they are the “Brightest and Best” to all whom they meet.